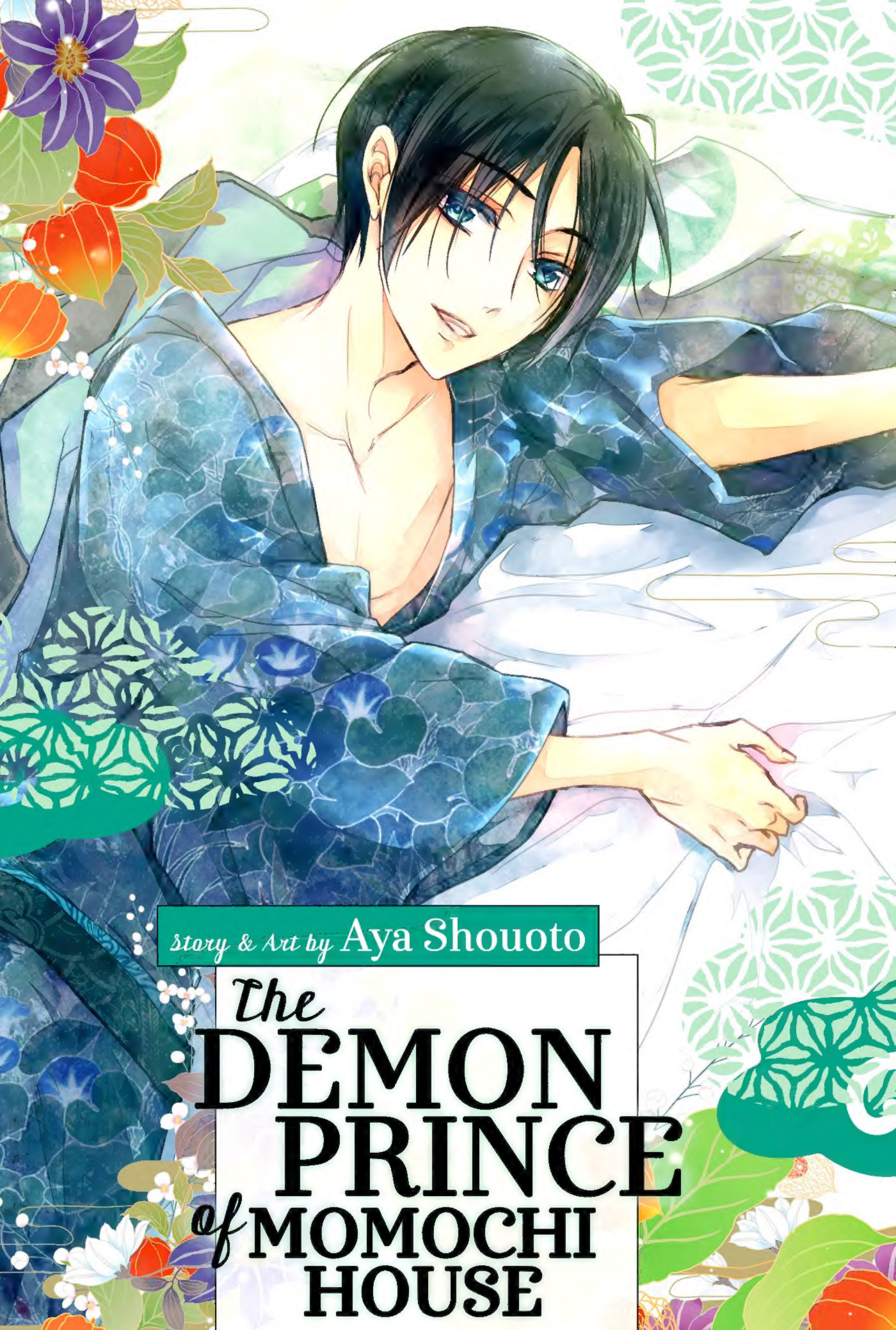
The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

5

Story & Art by
Aya Shouoto



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The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

Ephemeral Waters of
Past and Present: Part 1
CHAPTER
16

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The Mysterious Residents of Momochi House

Aoi Nanamori

When he was 7 years old, he wandered into Momochi House and was chosen as the Omamori-sama. He transforms into a nue to perform his duties, but it seems this role was meant for Himari.

Omamori-sama (Nue)

An ayakashi, or demon, with the ears of a cat, the wings of a bird, and the tail of a fox. As the Omamori-sama, the nue protects Momochi House and eliminates demons who make their way in from the spiritual realm.

Yukari

One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's a water serpent.

Ise

One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's an orangutan.

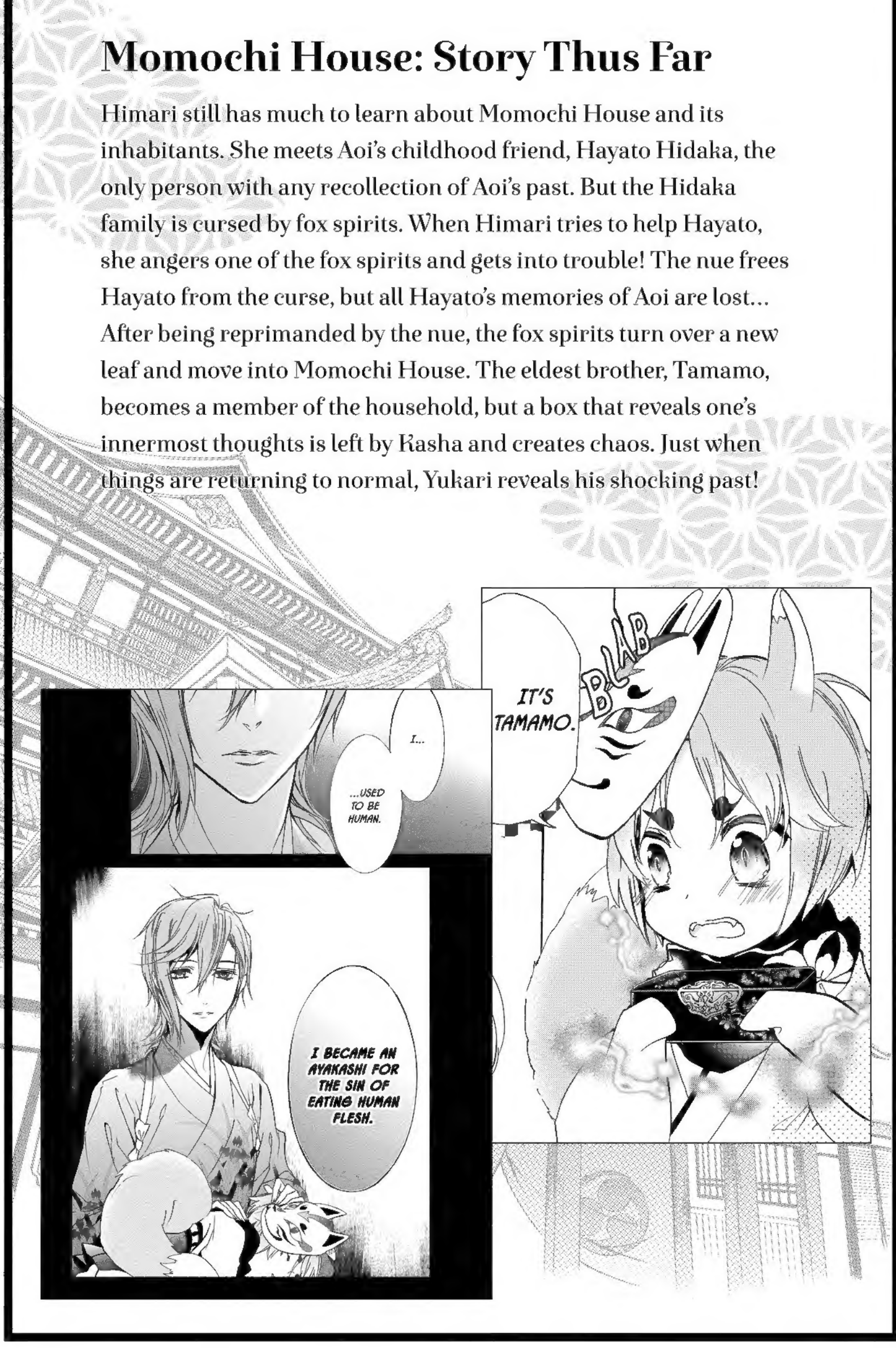
Himari Momochi

A 16-year-old orphan who, according to a certain will, has inherited Momochi House. As rightful owner, she has the ability to expel beings from the house.

Lesser Yokai

Momochi House: Story Thus Far

Himari still has much to learn about Momochi House and its inhabitants. She meets Aoi's childhood friend, Hayato Hidaka, the only person with any recollection of Aoi's past. But the Hidaka family is cursed by fox spirits. When Himari tries to help Hayato, she angers one of the fox spirits and gets into trouble! The nue frees Hayato from the curse, but all Hayato's memories of Aoi are lost... After being reprimanded by the nue, the fox spirits turn over a new leaf and move into Momochi House. The eldest brother, Tamamo, becomes a member of the household, but a box that reveals one's innermost thoughts is left by Kasha and creates chaos. Just when things are returning to normal, Yukari reveals his shocking past!



SHEN

IT'S HOT...

FLOP

FWAP

FWAP

REALLY HOT...

RWL

STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT THE HEAT! THAT ONLY MAKES IT FEEL HOTTER!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT IT THE MOST!

Plus you look hot and stuffy.

It's hot.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

VUP

IT'S SUMMER.

MOMOCHI HOUSE DOESN'T HAVE AIR CONDITION-ING OR ELECTRIC FANS.

ZUSHI, WHY ARE YOU IN HUMAN FORM?

FLUFF

FLUFF

IT'S TOO HOT FOR FEATHERS!

FWIP

FWIP

WHY IS EVERYONE LYING AROUND?

I BROUGHT A COLD TREAT.

OH! HOW NICE OF YOU!

Thank you, Yukari!

COLD ALMOND JELLY!

Thank you.

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE HEAT AFFECTS YOU AT ALL, YUKARI.

I'D LIKE TO SAY, "A CLEAR MIND IS FREE FROM PAIN."

I DON'T MIND THE HEAT BECAUSE I'M A WATER AYAKASHI.

I USED TO BE HUMAN.

I BECAME AN AYAKASHI FOR THE SIN OF EATING HUMAN FLESH.

HE WAS INTER-RUPTED ...

YUKARI...

Yummy.

SO THAT'S HOW IT WORKS...

NOM

HOW DOES A HUMAN BECOME AN AYAKASHI?

KLAK

I'LL CURSE YOU!

YUP

...WHEN TAMAMO WOKE UP. IT HASN'T COME UP AGAIN.

I'M CONCERNED, BUT I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD ASK ABOUT IT.

TAKE US TO A PLACE WHERE IT'S COOL!

HUH?

WHATEVER EVERYONE IS EATING LOOKS GOOD.

AOI!!

WHAT? WHAT?!

I BEG YOU!!

PLEASE!

GLOMP

THE REAR SCREEN?

IF YOU FASTEN THAT THING, WE CAN GO RIGHT TO THE WATERING HOLE!

WHAT?

YOU MEAN THE REAR SCREEN?

PLEASE, AOI!

I'M NOT SURE IT SHOULD BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE...

IT'S GOOD TO TAKE SOME TIME TO RELAX ONCE IN A WHILE, AOI.

WAIT A MOMENT AND I'LL MAKE LUNCH TO BRING ALONG.

YUKARI TOO...

THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME, ISN'T IT, HIMARI?

THIS SLIDING DOOR IS CALLED THE "REAR SCREEN."

THERE ARE MANY MYSTERIOUS ROOMS IN MOMOCHI HOUSE, BUT THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL DOOR.

IT CONNECTS THIS WORLD TO DIFFERENT PLACES IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM WHERE AYAKASHI RESIDE.

!

MAYBE WE SHOULD ALL TAKE A LITTLE TRIP.

I GUESS IT'S SETTLED THEN.

THE WORLD WHERE AYAKASHI RESIDE...

POK

THE SPIRITUAL REALM...

THIS AGAIN?

SO YOU'D BETTER KEEP THE HEADPIECE ON.

SHUU

IT'S THE ONLY PLACE WHERE AOI CAN VENTURE OUTSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

I'M OPENING IT.

FWI

SH

SHUK

COME.

WE'RE HERE.

THIS PLACE IS MUCH LARGER THAN THE ROOM I WAS LURED INTO BY THAT OLD CHERRY TREE DEMON.

Amazing

WOW! IT'S HUGE.

YOU CAN RELAX HERE.

WE'RE IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, BUT THIS PLACE IS SAFE. IT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE GROUNDS AT THE ESTATE.

SOOF

ONLY THE HANDLES REMAIN ...

KLAK

THRONG

It's like bobbing for apples!

WHY IS IT SO CROWDED?

ONLY HARMLESS AYAKASHI PLAY HERE...

HUH?

TEEM

IT'S EVEN HOTTER HERE!

TEEM

IT WASN'T THIS CROWDED LAST TIME...

MRMR

IT CAN'T BE HELPED...

I KNOW A GOOD SPOT.

YOU'RE RIGHT...

SHALL WE LOOK ELSE-WHERE?

MAN, THIS ISN'T RELAXING AT ALL!

...

THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN STILL SWIM!

MRMR

THE OTHER WATERING HOLES ARE ALL POLLUTED...

MRMR

MRMR

WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

...

A SECRET WELL?

WHAT THE...? THIS IS THE MOMOCHI HOUSE WELL.

DO ON

THIS WAY.

FWSSS

GAH!

SHALL WE?

AAAAH!

A BEAUTIFUL WATER-FALL...!

SPLASH

HE'S RIGHT.

IT'S COOL AND REFRESHING.

I'm revived!

IT'S SO NICE!

THE WATER IS ICE COLD!

I DON'T WANT TO GET DRENCHED EITHER.

REALLY?

THEN ...

I'LL HELP YUKARI PREPARE LUNCH.

SPLASH

SPLASH

PLASH

AREN'T YOU COMING IN, AOI?

IT'S SO NICE HERE. I THINK I'LL FINISH THIS BOOK.

I KNOW!

YEAH. THOSE TWO WILL GET YOU.

PLUS...

WE'RE OUTSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

EVEN IF IT'S ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE, I WANT TO BE BY HIS SIDE...

THIS SPRING ISN'T POPULAR WITH AYAKASHI.

THEY CALL THIS PLACE THE "MAN-EATING SWAMP."

JOLT

THIS SURE IS A GREAT SPOT. IT'S LIKE A PRIVATE PARTY.

YOU'RE THE BEST, YUKARI!

You're not even a man. Don't be a sissy.

GLUB GLUB

OH... SO THIS PLACE...

YES.

WHEN YUKARI...

...STOPPED BEING HUMAN...

I WAS ALLOWED TO LIVE HERE WHEN I BECAME AN AYAKASHI LONG AGO.

IT'S ONE OF THE SEVEN SACRED FALLS OF RYUJIN, THE DRAGON GOD.

THIS IS A SMALL SPRING, BUT THE NAME IS A DETERRENT.

IT KEPT THE OTHER DEMONS AWAY.

I DRAW THIS WATER FOR OUR HOUSE-HOLD USE.

BUT THE WATER IS VERY CLEAN.

THERE'S THE HOUSE I LIVED IN WHEN IN HUMAN FORM.

NO.

Or your daddy's...

Did you live your whole life in the saddle?

YOU GOT TO LIVE IN THIS SPRING?!

Cool!

*Japanese version of Aesop's fable, "The Honest Woodcutter."

?!

IT WASN'T ME! I CAN'T PEE THAT MUCH!

PLASH

PLASH

GOOSH

YUCK! TAMAMO JUST PEED IN HERE!

THEN WE SHOULD ALL BE THANKFUL FOR THIS WATER.

IT'S NOT THAT!

LOOK.

DON'T TEASE HIM TOO MUCH, ISE...

KIDS WILL BE KIDS.

IT'S SPREAD-ING.

THE COLOR OF THAT WATER IS UNUSUAL...

EVERYONE OUT!

TAINTED WATER?

POISON-OUS...

IT'S POISONOUS. IT EATS AWAY AT THE FLESH OF AYAKASHI.

IT MUST BE WELLING UP FROM UNDERNEATH THE SPRING.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO YOUR SPRING?

...

ACTU-ALLY...

...YUKARI'S SPRING MAY NOT BE THE ONLY ONE.

I OVERHEARD THE LESSER YOKAI COMPLAINING ABOUT WATER BECOMING POLLUTED.

THE OTHER WATERING HOLES COULD BE AFFECTED BY THIS AS WELL.

IF THESE WATERS ARE TAINTED...

...SOMETHING MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM.

MUCH OF THE WATER FLOWING INTO THE SPIRITUAL REALM ORIGINATES FROM RYUJIN'S SANCTUARY.

THE SEVEN SACRED FALLS EXIST IN BOTH THE HUMAN WORLD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

RYUJIN SWIMS BETWEEN THE TWO, PURIFYING THEM.

RYUJIN IS YOUR... MASTER, RIGHT?

YOU MUST BE WORRIED.

MASTER? I AM AN AYAKASHI. HE IS EVEN MORE THAN A PARENT TO ME.

IT MAY SOUND PRESUMPTUOUS TO SAY THIS AS A FORMER HUMAN, BUT I BELONG TO RYUJIN.

THOUGH...

...I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A LONG TIME.

SINCE YOU CAME TO MOMOCHI HOUSE?

YES.

I'VE RETURNED TO THIS SPRING SEVERAL TIMES, BUT I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED HIM...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY THESE WATERS HAVE BECOME TAINTED.

THE DRAGON GOD IS ANGRY.

WHY ARE YOU HERE?!

WE LIVE IN THIS AREA.

VMP

...WHO IS MEANT TO WATCH OVER THIS SPRING HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR TOO LONG.

RYUJIN IS ANGRY BECAUSE THAT WATER SERPENT...

IF ALL THE WATERS IN THESE PARTS BECOME POLLUTED, WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE.

SO THIS SPRING IS POLLUTED NOW TOO.

THEN WHY HASN'T RYUJIN APPEARED?

I HAVE ALWAYS FULFILLED MY DUTIES AS GUARDIAN OF THIS SPRING.

...RYUJIN ORDERED ME TO SERVE AT MOMOCHI HOUSE.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...

...

RYUJIN'S SILENCE IS EVIDENCE OF HIS ANGER.

YOU BECAME AN AYAKASHI FOR EATING HUMAN FLESH. YOU CANNOT FATHOM THE HEART OF RYUJIN!

...

THE BEST SOLUTION IS FOR RYUJIN TO RETURN TO THIS SPRING FROM WHEREVER HE MAY BE...

I UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERN.

WHATEVER THE REASON THE WATER BECAME TAINTED, WE MUST THINK OF A WAY TO PURIFY IT.

ISE.

STOP TALKING NONSENSE-

A SACRIFICE?

EVEN WE AYAKASHI CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH RYUJIN.

ONLY ONE WHO IS SACRIFICED IN THE SUMMONING RITUAL CAN EXCHANGE WORDS WITH HIM.

YES ...

WE NEED A SACRIFICE.

A SACRIFICE.

THAT WATER SERPENT THERE...

...WAS ONCE A HUMAN SACRIFICE FOR RYUJIN.

YUKARI...

THE SACRIFICE MUST BE A HUMAN.

MRMR

YES...

YES!

MRMR

WE'LL HAVE TO ABDUCT ONE FROM SOME-WHERE

A TASTY ONE.

PLEASE CALM YOURSELVES! WE'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY.

I'LL DO IT.

SWIK

I'LL BE THE SACRIFICE.

HIMARI ...!

A HUMAN!

THERE WAS A HUMAN AMONG US.

PERFECT!

THIS YOUNG GIRL WILL BE OUR SACRIFICE.

ENOUGH!

THIS GIRL IS A DESCENDENT OF MOMOCHI.

AS A SERVANT OF MOMOCHI HOUSE, I CANNOT ALLOW HER TO RISK HER LIFE, EVEN TO APPEASE RYUJIN.

MRMMR

SACRIFICE

A HUMAN

BUT

MRMMR

HIMARI.

THE SUMMONING RITUAL IS DANGEROUS. YOU MUST OFFER YOUR SOUL TO RYUJIN.

IT'S NOT AN ACT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.

LET ME TRY TO SPEAK TO RYUJIN... SOMEHOW...

YUKARI...! YOU'RE SO PALE!

...!

SLUMP

YUKARI!

KLAK

YUKARI!

HOLD

KLAK

YUKARI IS THE GUARDIAN OF THIS SPRING, AND THIS PLACE IS THE SOURCE OF HIS SPIRITUAL POWER.

THE TAINTED WATER IS TAKING A HUGE TOLL ON HIM.

AOI...

I WANT TO SERVE AS THE SACRIFICE.

I CAN'T JUST DO NOTHING WHILE YUKARI GROWS WEAKER.

NO.

YUKARI TOLD YOU, DIDN'T HE? RYUJIN IS A DRAGON GOD.

HE'S IMMUNE TO HUMAN REASON. IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS.

UNDER-STAND, HIMARI?

YOU MAY INTERACT WITH AYAKASHI AT MOMOCHI HOUSE AND LIVE BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS...

...BUT DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THEIR POWER.

THE WAYS OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS ARE AS MYSTERIOUS TO HUMANS AS DARKNESS ITSELF.

...

BUT YUKARI KNOWS BOTH WORLDS.

I CAN SEE HE'S SUFFERING.

HUMANS SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED.

IT'S QUIET AND CLEAN, BUT ISOLATED...

THE AYAKASHI STAYED AWAY FROM THIS SPRING, SO YUKARI WAS HERE ALL BY HIMSELF.

I CANNOT SEE INTO RYUJIN'S HEART.

THIS IS WHERE YUKARI LIVED ON HIS OWN?

BUT RYUJIN ORDERED HIM TO GO TO MOMOCHI HOUSE.

I WANT TO BELIEVE RYUJIN'S INTENTIONS WERE GOOD.

I WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND, AOI!

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...

...BEFORE THE TAINTED WATERS SPREAD.

I KNOW...

...BUT...

B-BMP

LISTEN, HIMARI.

IF ANY SPIRITUAL BEING WISHES YOU HARM...

I DON'T WANT TO PUT YOU IN DANGER.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND HOW I FEEL TOO.

HUG

...I WILL EXORCISE IT.

EVEN IF IT'S RYUJIN.

THANK YOU, AOI.

AOI...

SO PROMISE ME YOU WON'T BE RECKLESS.

I SUMMON YOU...

SWFF

SWFF

I OFFER UNTO YOU A SACRIFICE.

SH

...SOURCE OF THE SEVEN SACRED WATERFALLS...

...RYUJIN.

...COME FORTH TO THIS SPRING...

WE CAN'T GET NEAR YOU BECAUSE OF THAT POLLUTED WATER.

DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH, HIMARI.

...

...

KLAK

...

SHING

RYUJIN...

OM

RHHH

AAARRRR
HOW VERY...
...TER-RIBLE...
YOU'RE BLACK...

YOU'RE BLACK...

HAAAAA

HOW VERY...
...TER-RIBLE...

THE GREAT RYUJIN ...

...HAS BECOME TAINTED! HE'S TRANSFORMING INTO A CURSED GOD!

HOW UNFORTUNATE...

...

...HAS BEEN CURSED ...

THE BEAUTIFUL RYUJIN...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

SLUMP

PLEASE, RYUJIN...

LISTEN TO ME...!

LUNGE

HE CANNOT HEAR YOU NOW, EVEN AS A SACRIFICE.

STAY BACK, HIMARI!

RYUJIN!

I WILL EXORCISE HIM.

GLINT

WHAT IS THAT?

SOMETHING IS CATCHING THE LIGHT.

TMP

PLEASE... WAIT...

NO!

SH

NUE...

HIMARI!

Chapter 16/End

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

CHAPTER
17

Ephemeral Waters of Past and Present: Part 2

RYUJIN TRAVERSES THE SEVEN SACRED WATERFALLS THAT THE HUMAN WORLD AND SPIRITUAL REALM SHARE...

...TO MAINTAIN THE PURITY OF THE WATERS.

IN HIS BLACK-ENED SCALES...

...I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SOME-THING THAT GLIMMERED.

HIMARI!

ZUSHI ...!

SHE ATE THE CANDY THAT WILL ALLOW HER TO BREATHE UNDERWATER, BUT SHE'LL BE TAKEN AWAY BY RYUJIN!

PASH

AHH!

IDIOT!

I TOLD YOU THIS TAINTED WATER EATS AWAY AT THE FLESH OF AYAKASHI!

THEN...

NUE! PLEASE BREAK MY SEAL!

DON'T BE FOOLISH.

7 WISH

I WON'T ALLOW HIM TO TAKE HIMARI.

...I WILL FACE HIS WRATH, WHATEVER THE COST MAY BE.

ZOO

TO CHALLENGE RYUJIN...

...ONE MUST BE PREPARED TO SUFFER HIS DIVINE PUNISHMENT.

SH

HOWEVER...

NUE...

NUE, PLEASE STOP!

YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION TO BE HERE...

YUKARI!

REI!

HUFF

HUFF

BREAK MY SEAL.

PLEASE.

ALLOW ME...

...TO RETURN ONCE MORE TO RYUJIN.

YUKARI, YOU CANNOT ASK THAT!

WE DON'T KNOW IF RYUJIN IS ANGRY WITH YOU!

I DON'T CARE!

I NEED TO KNOW HIS TRUE FEELINGS.

FWARRR

...

BE SURE YOU RETURN TO US.

...

RWARR

PLEASE.
THIS IS...
...YUKARI'S TRUE FORM.
WOOSH
BE APPEASED, RYUJIN!
GUARDIAN OF THE SPRING, DESCENDED FROM WATER...
MIZUCHI, THE WATER SERPENT...
...BE FREED OF MY POWER AND GO.

GUARDIAN OF THE SPRING, DESCENDED FROM WATER...

MIZUCHI, THE WATER SERPENT...

...BE FREED OF MY POWER AND GO.

PLEASE.

THIS IS...

...YUKARI'S TRUE FORM.

TWO

OSH

BE APPEASED, RYUJIN!

RWARR

RWARRRR

RRR

RYUJIN!!

RYUJIN IS ANGRY WITH ME.

IT'S AS I FEARED...

DON'T GIVE UP!

HIMARI!

YUKARI?! IS THAT YOU?

GP

HANG ON TIGHT, HIMARI.

!

...!

I SEE IT.

THERE'S A SHINY SCALE NEAR RYUJIN'S NECK!

THAT MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS!

SHA

GLINT

THUSH

A PAPER SEAL?!

ENT

THE WATERS ARE CALM.

SHAA

WHAT HAP-PENED?

...

WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE?

BLUB

PLUB

PLUB

WHAT ARE THESE VISIONS?

YUKARI...

THESE ARE MY MEMORIES...

A CHILD...?

PLUB

THIS IS HOW I BECAME AN AYAKASHI.

LONG AGO...

STOP HERE.

KLAT

KLAT

KLAT

...AN ORPHANED BOY WITH SILVER HAIR AND BLUE EYES WAS ABANDONED IN THE RUN-DOWN CAPITAL.

KRRK

I'M SEEING YOUR MEMO-RIES?

...FROM LONG AGO...

...WHEN I WAS STILL A HUMAN CHILD.

...

...IN THE FOAM THAT OVER-FLOWED IN RYUJIN'S WAKE.

IT SEEMS OUR CON-SCIOUSNESSES MERGED...

IT'S TIME...

...FOR ME TO SHOW YOU EVERYTHING, HIMARI.

BOY...

...COME INTO MY CARRIAGE.

...

KLATT KLATT KLATT

LOOK THERE.

UNFORTUNATE CHILDREN LIKE YOU ARE DYING ON THE ROADSIDE IN THIS CAPITAL.

DO YOU KNOW WHY?

THE GOVERNMENT.

IT'S ALL THE CURRENT EMPEROR'S FAULT.

THE YOUNG BOY WAS PICKED UP BY A NOBLEMAN WHO SERVED IN THE COURT OF AN INFAMOUSLY CORRUPT EMPEROR.

YOUR FACE IS BEAUTIFUL.

LET ME BRING OUT ITS FULL POTENTIAL.

...

LET ME SEE...

THE NOBLEMAN INTENDED TO RAISE THE BOY AS AN ASSASSIN.

ONE DAY YOU WILL BECOME CLOSE TO THE EMPEROR AND TAKE HIS LIFE.

HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE MISFORTUNES OF THE WORLD AROUND HIM.

WHETHER BY NATURE OR NURTURE, THE BOY GREW UP DETACHED.

I SHALL NAME YOU YUKARI.

EVENTU-ALLY...

BUT HE DID DEVELOP A SENSE OF LOYALTY TO THE MAN WHO RAISED HIM.

GOOD, YUKARI.

...HE WOULD RESOLVE TO ASSASSINATE THE EMPEROR.

...HE DISGUISED HIMSELF AS A PRINCESS RELATED TO THE NOBLE-MAN.

AT THE AGE OF 14...

THE BOY SOON BECAME THE OBJECT OF THE EMPEROR'S ADORATION.

THE BOY WAS ACCEPTED INTO THE INNER PALACE.

...THE BOY PLANNED TO ASSAS-SINATE HIM AND ESCAPE WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE.

NO ONE WOULD SUSPECT THE NOBLE-MAN'S INVOLVE-MENT.

ONCE HE WAS ALONE WITH THE EMPEROR...

...AND WAS INSTANTLY CAPTIVATED.

THE EMPEROR, WHO DELIGHTED IN RARITIES, TOOK ONE LOOK...

TIME PASSED AS THE BOY WAITED FOR THE OPPORTUNITY.

YUKARI !

YUKARI, LET ME LAY MY HEAD ON YOUR LAP.

?

AS YOU PLEASE

YUKARI.

...YOU SEEM SO CALM. IT'S AS IF YOU ARE FAR REMOVED FROM THE SUFFERING OF THIS WORLD.

WITH YOUR OTHER-WORLDLY LOOKS...

THE EMPEROR WAS SEEN BY ALL AS A FOOL WHO MADE HIS PEOPLE SUFFER...

THEN ONE DAY...

YOU SUMMONED ME, YOUR HIGHNESS ?

THE BOY'S FEELINGS BEGAN TO WAVER.

...BUT HE WAS A YOUNG MAN WITH A KIND HEART...

...CRUSHED BY THE WEIGHT OF HIS DUTY.

YOUR HIGH-NESS!

...

YUKARI ?

YOU MUST FLEE FROM HERE.

...WHO CONSPIRED WITH THE NOBLEMAN.

WE HAVE PROOF YOU ARE AN IMPOSTER...

DASH

DON'T MOVE!

I WISH...

...I WERE LIKE YOU...

THUP

DESPERATE TO PRESERVE HIS LIFE...

...YUKARI LOST CONTROL.

TMP TMP TMP TMP

WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO DID THIS?

!

WHAT ...

THE UTTER CARNAGE...

...STOPPED THE SOLDIERS IN THEIR TRACKS.

AN ENEMY OF THE NOBLEMAN HAD SET A PLAN IN MOTION TO FRAME YUKARI FOR THE EMPEROR'S MURDER.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIMSELF, THE NOBLEMAN SAID...

"THIS CHILD IS A DEMON!

"ONE WHO EATS HUMAN FLESH!

"INSTEAD OF HOLDING A TRIAL, WE SHOULD SACRIFICE THIS ABOMINATION IN THE SWAMP OF RYUJIN!"

YUKARI'S PAST...

LATER ON I REALIZED THE NOBLEMAN WAS BEING COMPASSIONATE. RATHER THAN MAKING A PUBLIC DISPLAY OF ME...

...HE ALLOWED ME TO SINK QUIETLY TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS SPRING.

SHALL I MAKE YOU AN AYAKASHI...?

RYUJIN SAVED ME...

...AND ALLOWED ME TO BE REBORN AS ONE OF HIS OWN KIND—A WATER SERPENT.

I SHOULD HAVE DIED THERE.

YOU...

I HAD NOTHING TO DO BUT WATCH TIME FLOW ON.

ONE DAY HE CAME TO THESE FALLS AND SAID...

RYUJIN MUST HAVE TAKEN PITY ON ME.

FOR A LONG TIME I WAS ALONE IN THIS SPRING.

I NEVER KNEW WHY.

I OBEYED AND LEFT FOR MOMOCHI HOUSE.

LATER I MET AOI AND BECAME HIS SHIKIGAMI.

GO TO MOMOCHI HOUSE.

"GO THERE AND DON'T RETURN."

HE SAID, "IT'S ABANDONED AND IN RUINS NOW, BUT THAT WILL CHANGE.

I'VE RETURNED HERE SEVERAL TIMES SINCE...

...I'VE WANTED TO ASK HIM WHY HE SENT ME...

...TO MOMOCHI HOUSE.

...BUT I HAVE NEVER SEEN RYUJIN.

ALWAYS ...

AM I DEFYING HIS WISHES...?

...BECAUSE HE THOUGHT YOU WERE LONELY.

I THINK HE SENT YOU AWAY...

LONELY?

ME...?

...

YOU WERE HERE BY YOURSELF FOR A LONG TIME.

HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT YOU WERE LONELY.

THAT'S WHY HE TOLD YOU TO GO TO MOMOCHI HOUSE WHERE THERE WOULD BE OTHERS.

...

...ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS ANGRY WITH ME.

I'VE...

"LONELY."

LOOK-ING BACK...

...I CAN UNDERSTAND.

IN THAT HOUSE...

I MET AOI.

THEN ISE AND THE OTHERS CAME.

AND HIMARI... YOU CAME.

I SEE IT NOW.

I WAS LONELY.

"LONELY"...
GURGLE
YES...
YOUR HEART... WAS LONELY.

"LONELY"...

GURGLE

YOUR HEART... WAS LONELY.

YES...

CLEAR WATER IS A SIGN OF MY SOLITUDE.
...I MUST NOT INTERACT WITH OTHERS.
I MUST KEEP THE WATERS CLEAR.
I SAW THE SAME COLOR REFLECTED IN YOUR EYES.
BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR YOU BY SIMPLY MAKING YOU AN AYAKASHI.
I WISHED TO EASE YOUR SOLITUDE.
FLOWING THROUGHOUT TIME IS MY FATE.

YUKARI...
THE COLOR OF YOUR EYES WAS FRIGHTENINGLY CLEAR.
WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU, I FELT WE SHARED THE SAME SOUL.
YET THEY WERE ALSO TERRIBLY EMPTY.
WATER MUST FLOW.
IT IS A REFLECTION OF THE WORLD'S TRUTH AND CRUELTY, AND EVEN OF MAN'S FATE.
THAT IS WHY...
MY FATE IS TO ROAM BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS TO KEEP THE WATERS CLEAN.
I WANTED TO SEE YOU REBORN AS AN AYAKASHI.

YUKARI...

THE COLOR OF YOUR EYES WAS FRIGHTENINGLY CLEAR.

WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU, I FELT WE SHARED THE SAME SOUL.

YET THEY WERE ALSO TERRIBLY EMPTY.

WATER MUST FLOW.

IT IS A REFLECTION OF THE WORLD'S TRUTH AND CRUELTY, AND EVEN OF MAN'S FATE.

THAT IS WHY...

MY FATE IS TO ROAM BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS TO KEEP THE WATERS CLEAN.

I WANTED TO SEE YOU REBORN AS AN AYAKASHI.

CLEAR WATER IS A SIGN OF MY SOLITUDE.

...I MUST NOT INTERACT WITH OTHERS.

I MUST KEEP THE WATERS CLEAR.

I SAW THE SAME COLOR REFLECTED IN YOUR EYES.

BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR YOU BY SIMPLY MAKING YOU AN AYAKASHI.

I WISHED TO EASE YOUR SOLITUDE.

FLOWING THROUGHOUT TIME IS MY FATE.

RYUJIN...

I COULDN'T BE WITH YOU ALL THE TIME.

I CLOSED MY EYES.

I CLOSED MY EARS.

MY BODY GRADUALLY TURNED HARD, LIKE STONE.

SO I CONTINUED TO ROAM...

...IN A WAY YOU WOULDN'T SEE ME.

I CLOSED OFF MY HEART.

I THOUGHT MOMOCHI HOUSE WOULD EASE YOUR SOLITUDE...

...SO I SENT YOU AWAY.

YOU ARE LOYAL. I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO HAVE DOUBTS.

SA

AT SOME POINT I WAS CURSED BY SOME WRETCHED DEMON.

I FORGOT WHO I WAS, AND I BECAME THAT MISERABLE CURSED CREATURE

...BUT I RECOVERED IT BY COMMUNING WITH YOURS.

THIS CAME ABOUT BECAUSE I LOST SIGHT OF MY SOUL...

EN

WHO WOULD HAVE REASON TO HARM YOU?

IT MATTERS NOT...

THE WATER IS TURNING CLEAR!

WATER SHOULD NOT FLOW WITHOUT FEELING...

RYUJIN.

YUKARI, SERVE YOUR NEW MASTER AT MOMOCHI HOUSE WITH YOUR HEART AND SOUL.

I WILL CONTINUE TO ROAM THESE WATERS.

...AND BECOMES CRYSTAL CLEAR.

WATER FILLS ONE'S SOLITUDE...

RYUJIN!

WATER FLOWS, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE STORED!

HIMARI?

UM, I MEAN...

SO ...

THANK YOU FOR KEEPING OUR WATER CLEAN!

IT'S ALWAYS NEAR US.

I'M SURE...

...WE'LL ALWAYS BE CONNECTED BY IT.

YOUR JOURNEY WILL BE A LITTLE LESS LONELY.

YES...

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, HIMARI...!

ALWAYS.

RYUJIN...

I PROMISE...

I'LL ALWAYS COME TO SEE YOU.

PLEASE LET ME HEAR YOUR VOICE WHEN YOU RETURN TO THESE WATERS.

...TO ALWAYS SEE YOU AGAIN.

AHH...

...

THEN
UNTIL
WE MEET
AGAIN...!

SPLASH

DASH

HIMARI!

YUKARI!

FWON

PLIK

...

I'VE RETURNED TO YOU.

SHFF

NUE.

I, YUKARI...

...THE WATER SERPENT ...

...WILL SERVE YOU AND YOU ALONE.

I WASN'T WORRIED.

I'M SORRY I WORRIED YOU.

I...

HUH?!

YOU ARE DIFFERENT, HIMARI.

GLARE

HOW-EVER...

YOU ARE MY FIRST SHIKIGAMI.

NUE...

I WILL PUNISH YOU LATER.

WHAT?

I TOLD YOU...

...NOT TO BE RECKLESS.

BUT... IT ALL ENDED UP OKAY.

LET'S GO HOME.

YES!

WHAT IS THIS PAPER SEAL?

Chapter 17/End

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

CHAPTER 18

Enjoying the Cool Evening Breeze?! A Scare Dare

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

EEEK!

FWUFF

GYA HA HA

YOU NEVER LISTEN, AND THEN YOU GET YOURSELF IN TROUBLE.

FWUFF

WHAT IS THIS?

NO WAY!

PYOP

I may need another fox for your legs.

I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TIE YOU UP.

PEEK

I SAID YOU'D BE PUNISHED.

NOOO!

I'M TICKLISH!

FWUFF

FWUFF

FWUFF

DON'T TRY TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF IT.

POIT

UH...

BUT EVERY-THING WAS RESOLVED, SO-

YOU MEAN WHAT THE NUE SAID?!

SHUFF

DON'T YOU KNOW...

...I GENUINELY WORRY ABOUT YOU?

HIMARI?

I...

...HAVE TO GET TO SCHOOL!

ZIP

SHE ESCAPED ...

TROMP TROMP

BLUSH

ZOOP

PLEASE! HELP ME WITH MY PROBLEMS!

ARE THERE ANY SPELLS THAT WORK?

CAN YOU GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE PAPER SEALS?

WHOA! WHAT'S GOING ON, EVERYONE?!

MOMOCHI!

?

HIDAKA REALLY LIGHTENED UP!

SOME GIRL TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT.

EVERYONE AT SCHOOL IS TALKING ABOUT YOU!

TALKING?

HE THINKS I'M RECKLESS...

...BUT I DIDN'T ENDANGER MYSELF ON PURPOSE.

AOI IS TOO PROTECTIVE, JUST LIKE YUKARI.

YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISPERSING HIS CURSE!

HIDAKA THINKS IT WAS ME...

OH, THAT...

WHO KNEW YOU WERE A **SPIRITUAL PRIESTESS!**

WHAT?!

WHAT ABOUT HELP ON THE ENGLISH TEST TOMOR-ROW?

MY SHOULDER'S REALLY BEEN BOTHERING ME!

WHAT'S MY LUCKY COLOR THIS MONTH?

MY BOYFRIEND CHEATED ON ME TWICE! CAN YOU UNCURSE ME?

HOW DID THEY COME TO THAT CONCLU-SION?

WAIT! I DON'T HAVE ANY SPECIAL POWERS! HONEST!

THE TEACHER SAID TO STUDY PAGES 12 THROUGH 20!

YOU SHOULD ROTATE YOUR SHOULDERS LIKE THIS! IT WORKS!

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT A LUCKY COLOR, BUT YOU LOOK GOOD IN GREEN.

IT'S TERRIBLE YOUR BOYFRIEND IS CHEATING.

TAP

AYAKASHI AND SPIRITS ARE DANGEROUS.

YOU SHOULDN'T MESS WITH THEM.

RIGHT, AOI?

SHUT UP! I READ SOMETIMES.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH A BOOK, HIMARI?

THAT'S WHAT I TOLD THEM, BUT...

WHAT'S THIS?

AOI...!!

100 TRIED AND TRUE SPELLS?

FLUP

WHAT IS THIS?

IT'S...

I TRIED MY BEST TO DISPEL THOSE RUMORS, BUT...

YOU TOUCHED ME—AND HE STOPPED CHEATING!

I SENT IN A POSTCARD WITH A GREEN STAMP ON IT AND WON A PRIZE!

MY SHOULDER FEELS A LOT BETTER THANKS TO YOUR SPELL!

YOU WERE EXACTLY RIGHT ABOUT THE TEST!

THINGS WORKED OUT BY COINCIDENCE, AND NOW THOSE RUMORS ARE SPREADING EVEN MORE!

AND THE PROBLEMS ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE SERIOUS.

I told them I didn't have special powers

AHHH

MOMOCHI, LISTEN TO MY PROBLEMS, WILL YA?

STAMPEDE

MOMOCHI, I NEED YOUR HELP!

DON'T DO ANYTHING DANGEROUS, OKAY?

B-BMP

This book is useless

CAN'T YOU JUST REFUSE?

I'M A TRANSFER STUDENT, SO I WANT TO BE APPROACH-ABLE...

Even if it's just for show...

THEY SAY THAT RUMORS LAST NO MORE THAN 75 DAYS...

A SCARE DARE?

YEAH!

IT'S A GOOD WAY TO MAKE MEMORIES IN THE SUMMER.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE NEXT NEW MOON, WE'RE GOING TO THAT HUMAN-FACED BOULDER ON THE RENGE MOUNTAIN PASS.

WE WANT THE SPIRITUAL PRIESTESS TO COME WITH US AS OUR BODYGUARD!

I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY SPIRITUAL POWERS...

HIDAKA!

WILL YOU COME IF MOMOCHI DOES?

HUH?

HM...

OKAY. I'LL GO.

HUH?

YAY!

YES!

WAS THIS JUST A PLOY TO GET HAYATO TO COME ALONG?

HIMARI.

HM?

OH

HUH? NO, THAT'S OKAY...

SORRY, I THINK THESE RUMORS ARE SPREADING BECAUSE OF ME.

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP.

HOW CAN I REFUSE NOW...?!

SO, THAT'S WHY...

...I AGREED TO GO ON THE SCARE DARE.

PEEK

I'M AGAINST IT.

BAM

I KNEW HE'D SAY THAT.

YOUR MOMOCHI BLOOD AGITATES AYAKASHI.

A SCARE DARE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

UM...

I'M SURE IF ANYTHING DANGEROUS HAPPENS IT'LL BE CALLED OFF.

AND ...

...IT'S TOO SOON AFTER THE FOX-MASK INCIDENT.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT HAYATO COMING ALONG.

JOLT

HAYATO...?

SO YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT HAYATO.

HM...

I SEE...

OKAY THEN!

WILL YOU GIVE ME A LUCKY CHARM LIKE LAST TIME?

NO, I DON'T WANT TO.

WHAT ...?!

I WON'T HELP YOU THIS TIME.

I'M AGAINST YOU GOING ON THIS SCARE DARE.

SAM

AOI...?!

NIGHT OF THE SCARE DARE

THE BOULDER WITH A HUMAN FACE WILL SPEAK ON THE NIGHT OF THE NEW MOON.

WE HAVE TO CLIMB RENRI MOUNTAIN PASS WITH JUST ONE SINGLE CANDLE.

HUH?

B-BMP

HUH? WE HAVE NO IDEA.

WHAT WAS THAT OLD SUPERSTITION ABOUT RENRI PASS?

I MEANT RENRI PASS, SORRY.

I THOUGHT YOU SAID IT WAS RENGE PASS.

COME ON, LET'S GO!

ZWF

ONLY ONE LIT CANDLE ON THIS DARK ROAD...?

TMP

TMP

TMP

AOI...

TMP
TMP
TMP
AOI.
I'M THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING.
WHY ARE YOU PACING BACK AND FORTH?
REMEMBER...
...THAT PAPER SEAL ON RYUJIN'S BODY THE OTHER DAY?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
I NOTICE YOU KEEP FLIPPING TO THAT SAME PAGE.
...
IT'S BEEN ON MY MIND AS WELL.
IT'S NOT...
...THAT I'M WORRIED...
RENGE PASS IS INHABITED BY A BENEVOLENT AYAKASHI.
THAT PLACE MAY NOT BE EVEN SCARY ENOUGH FOR A SCARE DARE.
I REALIZE THAT, BUT...
...

I'M GLAD HE'S WITH HER.

AND I CAN'T BE WITH HIMARI WHEN SHE'S OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.

...HAYATO IS A GOOD GUY.

I KNOW...

BUT...

WHAT IS THIS FEELING...?

SUF F

PSST

HEY, MOMOCHI, DO YOU...

IS HE STILL MAD?

NO ANSWER.

I'm in sleep mode...

TAP TAP TAP TAP

WHY ARE YOU ASKING ALL OF A SUDDEN?

IT'S NOT AS SCARY WHEN YOU'RE TALKING TO SOMEONE.

SO YOU DO. WHAT'S HE LIKE?

WHAT?!

...LIKE SOMEONE?

KLUP

HUH?

HE'S NICE.

A LITTLE SPOILED, MAYBE...

BUT COOL TOO.

I...

...WHAT HE'S LIKE.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW...

SOMETIMES AT CRITICAL MOMENTS, HE GOES QUIET...

I'M TALKING ABOUT AOI...

HEY.

HM...

HUH?!

HIDAKA? NO...!

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT HIDAKA?

OH...

HIMARI, IT'S DARK. STAY CLOSE TO ME. ARE YOU OKAY?

AH, OKAY.

I'M SENSING A WEIRD VIBE.

SOMETHING COLD WRAPPED AROUND MY LEG!

HELP ME, MOMOCHI!

WHAT HAP-PENED?

EEEEK!

ZWFF ZWFF

SHAAA

?!

SHOVE

HUH? WHERE...

EEEEK!

SOMETHING'S PULLING MY HAIR!

I'M FINE. THEY WERE JUST TOADS!

GLUK

OOPS, SORRY.

TH

GO HELP HER, MOMOCHI!

UD

?!

SHOOP

ICK!

THESE WEEDS ARE STICKY!

NOTHING. MOMOCHI IS JUST BEING DRAMATIC.

WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION?

SLIP

AH!

SHOVE

...WATCH YOUR STEP.

MOMOCHI...

HEE HEE

YOU'RE SO ACCIDENT-PRONE!

OH DEAR!

HEE

HEE

ARE YOU OKAY?

RAGGU

IT JUST... HAPPENED.

COME UP FRONT WITH ME.

IT'S DARK AND EASY TO LOSE YOUR STEP IN THE BACK.

YOU'RE WHY THEY'RE DOING THIS!

NO, I'LL BE FINE. ABSOLUTELY!

OH

LOOK.

LOOK, THERE'S THE BOULDER. WE'RE AT THE TOP.

THANK GOOD-NESS!

NO. THE SPELL WON'T WORK UNLESS THE FACE ON IT LAUGHS...

OH

WE DID IT! WE GOT UP HERE USING ONLY A SINGLE CANDLE!

TMP

TMP

TMP

IF WE'RE DONE...

...LET'S HEAD BACK. THE CANDLE IS ALMOST GONE.

THIS IS THE...

..."HUMAN FACE"...

HUH? I'M NOT INTERESTED...

BUT THE STATUE MIGHT LAUGH.

SURG

BUT...

OH

TUG TUG

It kind of looks like a face, but not really.

NO, I'M GOOD.

HIDAKA, LET'S GO CLOSER... TOGETHER.

SHOVE

WATCH OUT...!

HIMARI!

GEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

IT'S LAUGHING...

...MUST BE THE WIND.

IT...

WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

AH!

KRAK KRAK KRAK

?!

GEH

THE BOULDER IS LAUGHING...

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

IT'S JUST A SCRATCH. I'M FINE.

HUH?

YOU HURT YOUR HAND.

YEAH. WHAT WAS THAT?

ARE YOU OKAY, HIMARI?

ZIIIAA

LET'S GO BACK!

GEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

DON'T LOOK BACK. WATCH YOUR STEP.

IT'S SO DARK! I CAN'T SEE!

THAT LAUGH IS FOLLOWING US...!

CAN YOU SEE IT, HIMARI?

I CAN HEAR ITS LAUGHTER TOO.

BUT IT SOUNDS SO STRANGE.

WHAT IS THIS LAUGHTER? IS IT FROM AN AYAKASHI?

THUD

NOMOTO !

SHIP

NO...

...I CAN ONLY HEAR IT.

GEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

I CAN'T HANDLE THIS!

SOB

WE DIDN'T THINK THIS WOULD HAPPEN...

CALM DOWN, EVERYONE!

GEH

HEH HEH HEH

THE VOICE IS EVERYWHERE, BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.

GEH

HEH HEH HEH

ARE YOU HURT? CAN YOU WALK?

IT'S NOT MY FAULT THE BOULDER IS LAUGHING...! IT'S SO CREEPY!

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

HEH HEH HEH

LET'S GO TO MOMOCHI HOUSE.

GEH

WHAT KIND OF AYAKASHI IS THIS?

HEH

HEH

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

HUH?

HUH?!

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.

PLUS MY HOUSE IS FAR AWAY-

SHAAA

YOU MEAN WE CAN GO TO YOUR HOUSE?

MOMOCHI... HOUSE...?

WHY ARE WE SO CLOSE?

OKAY.

HAVE THEM REST IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

I'M WALKING DOWN THE HILL. I'LL BE BACK WITH LIGHTS AND A CART.

DASH

HAYATO ...

HEH

HEH

HEH

HEH

GEH

I'M SCARED!

PLEASE, MOMOCHI!

LET US IN.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED...

OKAY...

COME IN!

IT'S SO OLD... I MEAN HUGE.

LIKE A HAUNTED HOUSE...

PSST

STOP IT!

PSST

WOW!

TMP

TMP

THE LAUGHTER STOPPED...

KLAK

THE HOUSE IS SILENT.

EVERYONE MUST BE ASLEEP.

I'LL GO MAKE SOME TEA.

YOU CAN REST IN HERE.

THANKS! BUT DON'T GO TO ANY TROUBLE.

DON'T STEP EVEN ONE FOOT...

...OUTSIDE THIS ROOM, OKAY?

I SHOULDN'T WAKE UP AOI...

KLAK

SIGH

...

WHAT'S WITH HER?

SHE'S CLEARLY TRYING TO SCARE US.

HUH?

NOMOTO, I THOUGHT YOU WERE SICK.

THE VOICE WAS COMING FROM HER.

ARE YOU SERI-OUS?

I'M SURE SHE USED THAT TO SCARE US.

I SAW HER PLAYING WITH A PHONE IN A WOODEN CASE.

WHAT ?!

I'M TOTALLY FINE. THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GHOSTS.

THAT VOICE WAS MASTER-MINDED BY MOMOCHI.

I WAS HOPING HIDAKA WOULD CARRY ME.

THAT WAS AN ACT.

WOW. BUT AREN'T YOU SCARED?

SHE DEFINITELY HAS HIDAKA FOOLED.

SHE RUINED THE SPELL OF THE HUMAN-FACED BOULDER...

TMP

KLAK

YEAH !

Y-YEAH... THEN HIDAKA WILL REALIZE...

LET'S PROVE SHE'S NOT A SPIRITUAL PRIESTESS AND TELL EVERYONE THE TRUTH.

WHERE'S THE ENTRANCE? HER BAG IS OUT THERE.

TMP TMP TMP

IT'S CREEPY...

ISN'T IT COOL FOR SUMMER?

THEY MUST HAVE THE AC ON. YOU'RE FREAKING YOURSELF OUT.

I SWEAR I SAW IT...

THAT WAS JUST A BRANCH.

OUTSIDE! SOMEONE WAS HANGING UPSIDE DOWN!

STOP SCREAMING!

JOL

GYAAAAAH!

HEY...

DO YOU HEAR SLOW...

... FOOT-STEPS?

TMP

I HEAR FOOTSTEPS. THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER!

THIS HOUSE IS SO OLD. MAYBE IT'S A LEAKY ROOF!

SOMETHING COLD JUST TOUCHED MY SHOUL-DER...

TMP TMP TMP

WAIT! THERE'S NO SUCH THINGS AS-

I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!

LEAK

EEEEEK

THUD

TMP TMP TMP TMP

?

WHAT IS GOING ON?!

WHAT HAPPENED TO EVERYONE?!

YOUR FRIENDS WERE A LITTLE TOO RAMBUNCTIOUS, SO WE GAVE THEM A LITTLE SCARE. YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?

THAT FELT GOOD!

THIS IS SLEEPING INCENSE. THEY WON'T REMEMBER A THING.

OH...

NEVER MIND THAT.

SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO HAVE FRIENDS OVER SO LATE...

I'M SORRY!

THE NUE IS FURIOUS...

WHERE DID YOU PICK THAT UP?

FOOSH

?!

HUH?

GEH HEH

HEH

IS THIS FROM THAT ROCK?!

HEH

YO

ONK

?!

THOSE WHO TOUCH THE STONE TOGETHER...

...MUST KISS WITHIN ONE WEEK OR...

...DIE.

GEH HEH HEH HEH

HIMARI ...

IS THIS THE VOICE THAT FOLLOWED ME?!

YOU TOLD ME RENGE PASS.

BUT YOU WENT TO RENRI PASS.

THAT SPELL-

IS TO CONSUM-MATE ♥ LOVE!☆

WHAT?!

W-WHAT...?

I TOUCHED THE STONE WITH...

HAYATO!!

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

KREEE

TAK

TAK

TA

I THOUGHT YOU'D COME ABOUT NOW...

...AOI.

I'VE COME TO COLLECT ON YOUR DEBT.

CHAPTER 19

Jealousy and Love

IF YOU SAY SO, IT MUST BE TRUE, HIMARI.

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A LOVE SPELL... I THINK IT HAPPENED BY ACCIDENT.

Well, um... I think so.

...OR DIE.

KISS...

AOI IS TRYING TO BREAK IT, BUT IT'S NOT EASY.

PWOP

HEY...

STAY DOWN.

THEN...

SO THIS MARK...

...IS A CURSE?

SWIP

WE'D BETTER KISS.

REALLY?!

WHAT?!

HAYATO DOESN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT STUFF LIKE THIS...

BULL'S-EYE

THAT'S SOMETHING HAYATO WOULD SAY.

"WELL...

"IT'S BETTER THAN DYING, RIGHT?"

WHAT IS IT, HIMARI?

SHUT UP!

HMM. ☆ COULD IT BE YOU'VE NEVER-

HUH ?!

I'M NOT TREMBLING!

THEN WHY ARE YOU TREM-BLING, ISE?

HMPH.

DON'T BE MISSISH! IT'S A KISS, SO GET IT OVER WITH.

KISS!

KISS! WOO HOO! What a cool curse.

IS IT DIFFICULT BECAUSE YOU HAVE FEELINGS FOR HIM?

I'LL BREAK THE CURSE.

IN ANY CASE...

THOK

HUH? DID I SAY SOMETHING WEIRD?

...

THE AIR SUDDENLY GOT COOLER WITHOUT AC. HOW "GREEN" OF YOU, ZUSHI.

HUH? OH... OKAY.

SHUP

OKAY?

HIMARI, STAY AWAY FROM HAYATO.

IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE...

DONG DONG DONG

ARE YOU JEALOUS, AOI?

SWIP

ISE, CAN YOU CHECK SOMETHING FOR ME?

IS IT POSSIBLE?

!

BMP

SHOOP

I'M SUPPOSED TO AVOID HAYATO, BUT HE'S A CLASS-MATE.

HIMARI.

ARE YOU AVOIDING ME?

HAYATO...!

HAYATO...

LOOM

?!

HUH?

NO, NOT REALLY...

B-BMP

DON'T DISAPPEAR ON ME.

○×△□×!!

VUMP

...

IT WAS JUST A DREAM.

I KNOW

WHY HAYATO IS ON MY MIND.

IT'S HIS EYES.

DON'T DISAPPEAR.

HE SEES AOI THROUGH ME.

IF HE'S STILL...

...TRYING TO FIND...

...THOSE THREADS OF HIS LOST MEMORIES...

I WANT TO WATCH OVER HIM UNTIL HE AND AOI CAN MEET AGAIN.

!

MRMR

MRMR

...

...

...

YUKARI AND...

AOI?

THEN...

IT'S SO LATE, BUT THE LIGHT IS STILL ON..

TMP

I'LL GET SOME WATER AND TRY TO GO BACK TO SLEEP...

...THE CURSE FROM THAT STONE CANNOT BE UNDONE WITHIN ONE WEEK.

OH

THERE MUST BE A WAY.

WE HAVE TO OVERRIDE IT WITH A STRONGER SPELL.

...

BUT ONLY A GREAT DEMON CAN OVERRIDE THIS CURSE. WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHO AUTHORED THAT PAPER SEAL...

...

HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO COMES TO MIND.

STILL...

SHOULD I JUST GO UP TO HIM AND SAY, "LET'S KISS!"?

TMP

OR SHOULD I TRY TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING?

TMP

AARGH! TMP

I'LL RESEARCH IT A LITTLE FURTHER. IF ALL ELSE FAILS...

...I MAY HAVE TO CROSS OVER TO THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

THE SPIRITUAL REALM?

GRIP

I DON'T WANT TO PUT AOI IN DANGER.

SHMP SHMP

I WANT TO BE DECISIVE, BUT...

WHERE IS HAYATO WHEN I NEED HIM?

BUMP

EEK!

!

S...

SORRY.

OH.

NOMOTO.

MOMOCHI ...

PSST

...

SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY...

...AT THE SCARE DARE.

WHAT?

YOUR HAND.

THAT WAS MY FAULT.

OH, THIS? IT'S NOTHING.

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THAT NIGHT.

MAYBE I JUST IMAGINED THAT BOULDER LAUGHING AND PANICKED.

THEY DON'T REMEMBER BEING INSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

TO BE HONEST, WE KNEW ABOUT THAT OLD SUPERSTITION. A COUPLE WHO TOUCHES THAT BOULDER TOGETHER WILL BE UNITED.

WE WANTED IT TO TRY IT WITH HIDAKA.

THAT'S WHY WE INVITED YOU. YOU'RE GOOD FRIENDS WITH HIM.

CHILDISH, HUH?

OH...

I NEVER HEARD THAT SUPERSTI-TION.

UGH

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I'M IN THIS MESS.

BUT...

...I'M KIND OF OVER IT AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED.

RATHER THAN RELYING ON SUPERSTITIONS AND BEING SUSPICIOUS OF OTHERS...

...IT'S BETTER TO JUST TELL THE ONE YOU LOVE HOW YOU FEEL.

I'LL PROBABLY FEEL A LOT BETTER THAT WAY.

AFTER

I FEEL BAD FOR GETTING YOU TWO INTO THIS MESS. I'LL TELL HIDAKA HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM ONCE THINGS SETTLE DOWN.

SORRY, MOMOCHI...

...AND THANKS.

MY OWN FEELINGS...

SURE.

SHE'S RIGHT.

I THOUGHT YOU'D COME ABOUT NOW...

...AOI.

...

YOU SOUND AS IF YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE INVOLVED SOMEHOW...

TAK

TAK

TAK

...KASHA.

DO YOU KNOW THE CREATOR OF THIS PAPER SEAL?

SHFF

ONE OF MY SHIKIGAMI FOUND IT STUCK TO THE BACK OF A STONE WITH A HUMANLIKE FACE.

IT'S JUST LIKE THE MYSTERIOUS SEAL WE FOUND...

...WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED RYUJIN.

THE CHILDISH SUPERSTITION ABOUT THIS STONE HAS GROWN INTO A POWERFUL CURSE BECAUSE OF THIS SPELL.

I CAN'T REVERSE IT.

TELL ME, WHO IS THE TRUE MASTER OF THE SEAL?

NOW, AOI...

...IS THAT HOW YOU ASK SOMEONE FOR A FAVOR?

PILLOW? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

KASHA!

I'M NOT ASKING.

YOU OWE ME FOR THAT "PILLOW" INCIDENT.

TRANSFORM INTO THE NUE FIRST.

...

THEN WE CAN TALK.

EVEN AMONGST THE AYAKASHI ...

YOU CAN HELP ME JUST AS YOU ARE...

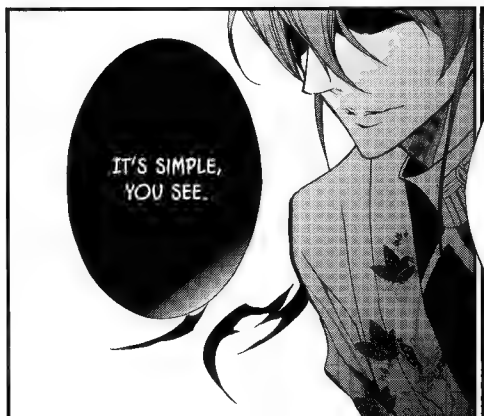
...HE HAS AN ETHEREAL QUALITY.

YOU ARE TRULY BEAUTIFUL.

A CROSS BETWEEN THE EXOTIC AND BESTIAL.

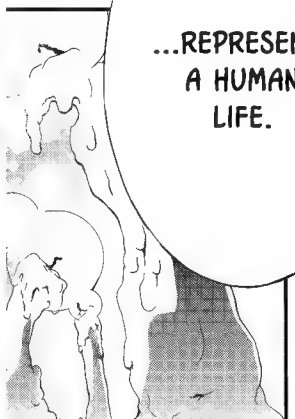
...NUE.

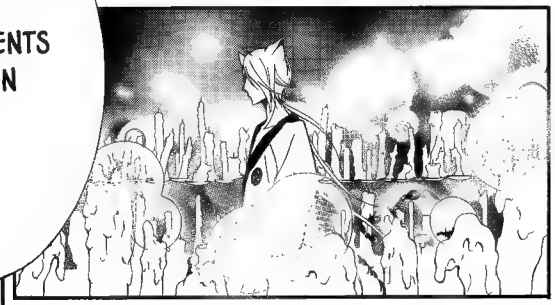
KREEEE


IT'S SIMPLE, YOU SEE.

THE ONES NEAR EACH OTHER ARE LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER BY SOME TWIST OF FATE.
IT MATTERS NOT IF THE CANDLES ARE LONG OR SHORT. DIFFERENT COLORS REFLECT DIFFERENT LIFE SPANS.

EACH CANDLE IN THIS ROOM...


...REPRESENTS A HUMAN LIFE.



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IT MATTERS NOT IF THE CANDLES ARE LONG OR SHORT. DIFFERENT COLORS REFLECT DIFFERENT LIFE SPANS.

THE ONES NEAR EACH OTHER ARE LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER BY SOME TWIST OF FATE.

SELECT TWO AND SWITCH THEIR FATES.

TOK

I DON'T CARE WHICH ONES.

THERE'S NO REASON TO KNOW IF THE OUTCOME IS GOOD OR BAD.

TAKE THE FLAME AT THE TOP OF THE CANDLE...

Spdy

...AND CHANGE ITS COURSE A LITTLE.

SHFF

SO...

...YOU CHOSE THESE TWO.

HEH

PHOO

THAT IS THE ROLE OF A DEMON.

TOK

MAN CANNOT CHANGE THE FATE OF MAN.

YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

...

IT'S ALL A GAME.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

YOU BASTARD...

YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A HUMAN.

YOU PICKED THEM.

THE KISS IS A CONTRACT.

YOUR FACE TURNED ASHEN WHEN YOU HEARD THE BOY AND GIRL WOULD BE CURSED UNTIL DEATH.

THAT STONE'S LOVE CURSE...

YOU'RE USUALLY SO OBSTINATE.

...THEIR LOVE WILL BE CONSUMMATED IN DEATH.

ONCE MADE...

I WILL NULLIFY THE CURSE AS PROMISED.

I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE TAKEN TEN LIVES...

...BUT I DO OWE YOU FOR THE PILLOW, SO WE'LL CALL IT EVEN.

HEH HEH

LET'S SAY... THE MARKS ON THEIR HANDS WILL WASH OFF IN THE HOT SPRINGS OF KUSATSU.

YOU LED ME TO BELIEVE...

I HEAR EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON WITH YOU, THAT IS ALL.

I SAID NOTHING OF THE SEAL.

...

...?!

BUT I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WHO CREATED THAT SEAL.

BUT...

...I'M NOT PLEASED A HUMAN IS MEDDLING IN AYAKASHI AFFAIRS.

SO THE CREATOR OF THAT SEAL IS HUMAN...

SPLASH

SWIPE

I'M HOME...!

HUFF

HUFF

WELCOME HOME, HIMARI.

Yay!

YOU'D BETTER HURRY BEFORE IT'S ALL GONE.

THEY'RE ALL EXCITED. THEY GOT A WATER-MELON.

WHAT?

WHERE ...

...IS EVERYONE?

YOU'RE EARLY TODAY.

I'M GOING BACK OUT...

...BUT FIRST...

I WANTED TO SEE YOU, AOI.

B-BMP

SHFF

TOK

OH, HIMARI.

LET ME SEE YOUR HAND.

NOTH-ING.

BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE CURSE ANYMORE.

HUH?

ZZZ

IT'S STILL THERE...

IS HE TRYING TO PUT ME AT EASE?

...

THE REASON I CAN'T JUST KISS HAYATO...

...IS BECAUSE I'M SUPPRESSING MY TRUE FEELINGS...

...THINKING THINGS LIKE, "WE LIVE TOGETHER," OR...

..."I DON'T KNOW HIM THAT WELL YET."

THEY'RE JUST EXCUSES.

I'LL NEVER FIND THE PREFECT TIME.

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE SOME WATER-MELON?

SPLASH

PHOO

OKAY.

AOI...!!

WHAT IS IT, HIMARI?

I'LL SET MY FEELINGS FREE.

I...

UM

UM

...

I...

I DON'T THINK OF YOU AS FAMILY.

...WHAT I SAID THE OTHER DAY?

REMEM-BER...

I'LL TELL HIM HOW I FEEL.

I'M TRULY IN LOVE WITH YOU.

I'M TRULY
IN LOVE
WITH YOU.

AOI...!

HIMARI...

I'M SORRY.

I CAN'T SEE YOU IN THAT WAY.

HUH?

Chapter 19/End

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

This is volume 5 of Momochi House.
Yukari's past is revealed. But as soon as the light shines on something, shadows emerge as well.
Many things will befall our residents going forward, but more than anything, Momochi House is a home. I hope they can find solace there.
Thank you for your continued support.
Until we meet again in Volume 6!

石踏あや
Aya Shouoto

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

Choosing a character for the cover became quite a challenge by volume 5. It was time for Kasha to make an appearance. Yokai were very popular in the Edo period. I strove to portray horror with the stylish flair of that era.

-Aya Shouoto

Aya Shouoto was born on December 25. Her hobbies are traveling, staying at hotels, sewing and daydreaming. She currently lives in Tokyo and enjoys listening to J-pop anime theme songs while she works.

The Demon Prince of Momochi House

Volume 5
Shojo Beat Edition

Story and Art by Aya Shouoto

Translation JN Productions
Touch-Up Art & Lettering Inori Fukuda Trant
Design Fawn Lau
Editor Nancy Thistlethwaite

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